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ABSTRACT

This study explored possible gender differences between the career paths of incumbent educational administrators holding the positions of superintendent, assistant superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal. Study data had been obtained from an earlier comprehensive survey of 622 incumbent and aspiring Pennsylvania administrators. That study explored five areas: career pathways, job search strategies, time usage, mentors and their functions, and barriers experienced with strategies to overcome them. The present study, which did not include aspirants, focused on line versus staff career patterns, the use of leaves, the number of moves among districts, degrees obtained, age at beginning administrative positions, and family characteristics. A majority of respondents pursued a line career path, with men (71 percent) more likely than women (52 percent) to have one. For both the superintendency and the elementary principalship, line paths were followed by men (82 percent) and women (54 percent). Both genders used line paths to reach the secondary principalship. For the assistant superintendency, women followed a staff path (73 percent) and men a line path (54 percent). Results for leaves, district moves, length of teaching service, and age and family characteristics are also discussed. Recommendations for practitioners are provided, including the importance of obtaining line positions, developing employment strategies for females, reviewing hiring and promotion standards and analyzing them for equity, and encouraging support groups. Recommendations for further research are also provided. Included are 14 references and 11 tables. (MLH)

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Gender Differences in the Career Paths Of Educational Administrators in Pennsylvania

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if gender differences exist between the career paths of incumbent educational administrators holding the positions of superintendent, assistant superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal. The data analyzed for this study had been obtained from a comprehensive survey of 622 incumbent and aspiring administrators conducted by Pavan which probed five areas: career pathways, job search strategies, time usage, mentors and their functions, and barriers experienced with strategies to overcome them. Random samples of 100 for each position by gender had been drawn with the total population used in cases where fewer than 100 were employed. The response rate was 53% with 298 respondents. Aspirants were not included in this study. This study concentrated on line versus staff career patterns, the use of leaves, the number of moves among districts, degrees obtained, years within teaching, years within administrative positions, the age at which administrative positions were begun, and family characteristics.

A line career path was taken by 65% of the respondents with men (71%) more likely than women (52%) to have one. To obtain the superintendency, line paths were followed by men (82%) and women (54%). Line paths were used by both genders to reach the principalship: 82% of the men and 54% of the

women for elementary and 64% of the men and 67% of the women for secondary. For the assistant superintendency, women had a staff path (73%) and men had a line path (54%). Leaves were taken by 21% of the respondents: 16% of the women with family and 14% with study leaves and 16% of the men with study and 1% with military leaves. The number of moves to a new district was associated more with position than gender with superintendents moving most often (3.07 times). Women taught significantly longer than men (10 versus 8 years). Men held line administrative positions longer than women and began them at a younger age. While 93% of the men were married with 67% having young children, only 68% of the women were married with 24% having young children.

The purpose of this study was to determine if gender differences exist between the career paths of incumbent educational administrators holding the positions of superintendent, assistant superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal and what those differences were. Other items examined for differences by gender, position, and gender and position were: the use of leaves, the number of moves among districts, degrees obtained, years spent within the classroom, years spent within administrative positions, the age at which administrative positions were begun, and family characteristics.

Research Design

The method of research was ex post facto in order to investigate the possible associations between the genders, positions, and gender and positions of incumbent administrators. A survey questionnaire developed by B. N. Pavan of Temple University was used to collect the data.

Population and Sample

The population available included all certified and employed professional educators in Pennsylvania. Except in instances where employment in position by gender is less than one hundred, random samples of 100 were drawn from populations with certificates issued since January, 1970 (Pavan, 1986). For the purpose of this study, the sample

included only those who were incumbent at the time, that is, in an administrative position for the 1985-1986 school year.

Surveys were sent to 100 randomly selected individuals in the following categories: male superintendents, male assistant superintendents, male secondary principals, male elementary principals, and female elementary principals. Surveys were sent to the total population for the following positions held by women: secondary principal (29), assistant superintendent (14), and superintendent (19). The total number of male and female incumbents in the sample was 562 with 298 respondents for a response rate of 53%.

Instrument

The four-page survey instrument was designed by B. N. Pavan of Temple University for those in possession of administrative certificates whether or not currently employed as a school administrator. Appropriate categories were gleaned from an extensive literature review. Pilot studies of various parts of the survey were done on women during several conference presentations. The complete instrument was tested on a small group of men and women (N = 12) outside of Pennsylvania but representative of those who would be given the final version to check the format. In addition to personal characteristics requested on the survey, it probed five areas: career pathways, job search strategies, time usage, mentors and their functions, and barriers experienced with strategies to overcome them (Pavan, 1986).

Summary of the gender Differences

A line career path was taken by 65 percent of the respondents with men more likely on a line path than women, 71 percent versus 52 percent. To obtain the superintendency, 83 percent of the men and 54 percent of the women and for the elementary principalship, 83 percent of the men and 51 percent of the women used a line career path. Both men (64 percent) and women (67 percent) used a line path career path to obtain the secondary principalship. Women (73 percent) were more likely to use a staff career path and men (54 percent) a line career path for the assistant superintendency.

Leaves were taken by only 21 percent of the respondents. Sixteen percent of the women accounted for the family leaves and 14 percent of the women for the study leaves. Sixteen percent of the men accounted for the study leaves and 1 percent of the men for the military leaves. Thirty-eight percent of the superintendents used leaves: 4 percent for family and 34 percent for study. Twenty-six percent of the assistant superintendents used leaves: 2 percent family, 22 percent study, and 2 percent for military. Eleven percent of the secondary principals used leaves: 4 percent for family, 6 percent for study, and 1 percent for military. Twelve percent of the elementary principals used leaves: 8 percent for family and 4 percent

for study. Leaves were taken by 47 percent of the female superintendents, 36 percent of the female assistant superintendents, 33 percent of the male superintendents, and 33 percent of the female secondary principals. Less than one-fourth of the respondents in the other categories used leaves.

The number of moves to new districts was more associated with position rather than gender. The average number of moves for all respondents was 1.75 with women moving 1.71 times and men moving 1.76 times. Superintendents had significantly more moves (3.07) to other districts than all other positions. Assistant superintendents (2.13) had more moves to other districts than secondary (1.15) or elementary (1.24) principals. Female superintendents moved most frequently (3.69) with male superintendents moving 2.93 times.

When considering the effect that educational variables may have on the career paths of educational administrators, no significant differences appear for Bachelors', Masters', or Doctoral degrees.

Women spent ten years in teaching while men taught for eight years. Elementary principals taught for eleven years which was significantly longer than assistant superintendents or superintendents who taught seven years each. Secondary principals taught for nine years which is

significantly longer than superintendents who taught for seven.

When analyzing the number of years spent in each administrative position, gender was significant with men in the position for a longer period of time than women for the positions of: elementary principalship, nine years versus six years; secondary principalship, eight years versus five years; and the superintendency, seven years versus four years. Only in the building and district staff positions and the assistant superintendency was gender not significant. When analyzing the years spent in administrative jobs, the current position held was significant for the positions of: elementary principalship with superintendents holding the position three to four years less than any other group and secondary principalship with respondents in that group holding the position five to six years longer than the other groups.

When analyzing the number of years spent in each administrative position, gender was significant with men in the position for a longer period of time than women for the positions of: elementary principalship, nine years versus six years; secondary principalship, eight years versus five years; and the superintendency, seven years versus four years. Only in the building and district staff positions and the assistant superintendency was gender not significant. When analyzing the years spent in

administrative jobs, the current position held was significant for the positions of elementary principalship with superintendents holding the position three to four years less than any other group and the secondary principalship with respondents in that group holding the position five to six years longer than the other groups.

Women were significantly older than men when starting the following positions: district level support (F = 37, M = 34); elementary principalship (F = 39, M = 32); secondary principalship (F = 40, M = 36); and the superintendency (F = 45, M = 39). Assistant superintendents, s econdary principals, and elementary principals were older when beginning their current job than those respondents who had been in the same position earlier in their careers.

Analysis of family data indicated that 17 percent of the women and 2 percent of the men had never married and 68 percent of the women and 93 percent of the men were married. Fifty-three percent of the women only 44 percent of the men were the first born or only child in their families. Only 27 percent of the women and 56 percent of the men had children age 17 and under.

Discussion

When comparing the results of this research to the review of literature (Ortiz, 1982), it is found that men still predominate in line positions and follow line rather than staff career paths in educational administration. Only

a small percentage of the respondents took leaves which agrees with the research done by Rometo (1982) who stated that less time is being taken from one's position regardless of the reason. Study is the major reason for leaves which concurs with other studies that indicate a decline in family leaves (McQuigg and Carlton, 1980). Although men moved slightly more than women, it is female superintendents who have moved the most which agrees with the results of other studies that geographic mobility can be a key element to advancement (Peter, 1986). Studies reveal that women remain in the classroom significantly longer than men (Schneider, 1986). This is true for the respondents in this study as well. After leaving teaching, women are in staff positions for a longer period than men (Tracy, 1985) as were the respondents in this study. When women included in this research received administrative positions, they were significantly older than men just as the women who have been studied by others (Fowler, 1983).Female educational administrators in this study were likely to be the first born or only child in their families as were those about whom Shakeshaft reported (1987). Women administrators surveyed by others, as well as the women in this study, were married much less frequently than men and had fewer children (Johnston, Yeakey, Moore, 1980).

Recommendations for Practice

1. Aspiring administrators or administrative certificate holders should review this study to determine the elements in the careers of incumbents most beneficial for advancement: that is, obtaining line positions appears to be most useful.

2. Faculty within the graduate departments of educational leadership should be aware of the hiring and promotion trends and help female students to develop employment strategies.

3. School district personnel departments should review their hiring and promotion standards and analyze them for equity. School boards should more carefully examine the qualifications of applicants regardless of gender.

4. School board policies should be developed that encourage administrators to seek out and recommend worthy potential candidates of both genders for in-service administrative preparation programs, special assignments, or to attend system wide conferences where administrative issues will be discussed.

5. Informal or formal support groups should be formed to share information about job openings, special programs, and administrative management strategies.

6. School Districts should investigate the feasibility of day care services within a school or district to aid aspirants and incumbents who have children to enter administration or maintain and develop their administrative careers.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Using the same data base compare certified aspiring administrators to determine how their career paths differ from those of these incumbent administrators.

2. Interview the incumbent administrators who responded to this survey to determine how they obtained line positions as they moved up the career ladder.

3. Survey graduates of educational administration preparation programs to determine their understanding of the effects of line and staff paths on their career advancement.

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Line and Staff Paths

Descriptive Data and Statistical Analysis

	LINE			STAFF			
	N	% of Gender	% of Total	N	% of Gender	% of Total	Sig.
All	194	--	65	86	--	29	--

Gender

	LINE		STAFF		
	N	% of Gender	N	% of Gender	Sig.
Female	48	52	42	45	.001
Males	146	71	44	21	

(raw chi square = 15.86, df = 1)

Positions

	LINE		STAFF		
	N	% of Position	N	% of Position	Sig.
Sup't	57	78	14	19	.0073
A Sup't	28	49	26	46	
Sec Prin	46	65	21	30	
Ele Prin	64	68	26	27	

(raw chi square = 12.03, df = 3)

Line and Staff Paths

Descriptive Data and Statistical Analysis

Gender and Position

	LINE			STAFF			
	N	% of Gender	% of Gender/ Position	N	% of Gender	% of Gender/ Position	
Sup't							
Female	7	8	54	6	6	46	.0052
Male	49	24	82	7	3	12	
(Raw chi square = 7.81, df = 1)							
Ass't Sup't							
Female	3	3	27	8	9	73	.0675
Male	25	46	54	18	9	39	
(raw chi square = 3.34, df = 1)							
Sec Prin							
Female	12	13	67	5	5	28	.8425
Male	34	17	64	16	8	32	
(raw chi square = .03, df = 1)							
Ele Prin							
Female	26	29	51	23	25	45	.0000
Male	38	19	83	3	1	7	
(raw chi square = 17.05, df = 1)							

Leaves Taken by School Administrators

	Family		Study		Military			
	N	% of Total	N	% of Total	N	% of Total	N	% of Total
All	15	5	46	15	2	0.7	63	21

Gender								
	N	% of Gender	N	% of Gender	N	% of Gender	Total N / %	Sig.
Females	15	16	13	14	-	--	28/30	.000
Males	--	--	33	16	2	1	35/17	

(raw chi sqaure = 21.22, df = 4)

Positions								
	N	% of Position	N	% of Position	N	% of Position	Total N / %	Sig.
Sup't	3	4	25	34	-	--	28/38	.001
A Sup't	1	2	13	22	1	2	15/26	
Sec Prin	3	4	4	6	1	1	8/11	
Ele Prin	8	8	4	4	0	0	12/12	

(raw chi square = 22.35, df = 6)

Leaves Taken by School Administrators

Gender & Positions	Family N	Family % of Gender	Study N	Study % of Gender	Military N	Military % of Gender	Total N / %
Sup't							
Female	3	3	6	6	-	--	9/47
Male	-	-	20	10	-	--	20/33
A Sup't							
Female	1	1	3	3	-	--	4/36
Male	-	-	10	5	1	0.5	11/24
Sec Prin							
Female	3	3	3	3	-	--	6/33
Male	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.5	2/ 4
Ele Prin							
Female	8	9	1	1	-	--	9/18
Male	-	-	2	1	-	--	2/ 4
Total	15		46		2		63/21

Raw chi square = 4.86
df = 3
p = 0.18

Mobility

Number of Districts in Which Each Respondent Was Employed

	Total Population
Mean	1.75
Number	280

	Female	Male
Mean	1.71	1.76
Number	90	190

F = 3.324
p. = .069

	Sup't	Ass't Sup't	Sec Prin	Ele Prin
Mean	3.07	2.13	1.15	.94
Number	69	54	67	90

F = 21.715
p. = .001

	Sup't	Ass't Sup't	Sec Prin	Ele Prin
Female Mean	3.69	2.27	1.18	1.24
Number	13	11	17	49
Male Mean	2.93	2.09	1.14	.59
Number	56	43	50	41

F = .472
p. = .702

Educational Variables

	Bachelors' N/Mean Age	Masters' N/Mean Age	Doctoral N/Mean Age
All	210 / 23	206 / 29	78 / 39
Females	66 / 23	65 / 30	24 / 39
Males	144 / 23	141 / 28	54 / 39
	f = .71 p = .39	f = 3.23 p = .074	f = .084 p = .773
Sup't	54 / 24	53 / 29	38 / 38
Ass't Sup't	36 / 23	36 / 28	25 / 40
Sec Prin	73 / 23	47 / 29	9 / 38
Ele Prin	47 / 22	70 / 29	6 / 39
	f = 1.08 p = .35	f = .308 p = .820	f = .210 p = .889
F Sup't	10 / 25	10 / 31	9 / 38
M Sup't	44 / 23	43 / 28	29 / 39
F Ass't Sup't	8 / 23	8 / 29	6 / 43
M Ass't Sup't	28 / 23	28 / 28	19 / 39
F Sec Prin	10 / 21	10 / 29	5 / 39
M Sec Prin	37 / 23	37 / 29	4 / 38
F Ele Prin	38 / 22	37 / 30	4 / 37
M Ele Prin	35 / 23	33 / 28	2 / 42
	f = 1.51 p = .212	f = .512 p = .674	f = .592 p = .622

Years in Teaching

	Total
Mean Years	8.8
Number	271

	Female	Male
Mean Years	10.45	8.11
Number	88	183

F = 14.53
p = .0002

	Sup't	Ass't Sup't	Sec Prin	Ele Prin
Mean Years	7.35	7.26	9.28	10.71
Number	67	50	67	91

F = 9.089
p = .0000

Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure

		AS	S	EP	SP
MEAN					
7.26	Ass't Sup't				
7.35	Superintendents				
9.28	Sec Prin		*		
10.71	Ele Prin	*	*		

* = pairs of groups significantly different
at the .05 level

Years In Administrative Positions By Gender and Position

	STAFF		LINE			
	Build'g Staff	Dis't Staff	Ele Prin	Sec Prin	A Sup't	Sup't
Gender						
Females						
N	18	39	54	25	16	13
Years	6	5	6	5	5	4
Males						
N	30	59	73	105	79	60
Years	4	5	9	8	7	7
F	2.92	.915	13.86	14.00	.424	5.10
p	.094	.341	.001	.001	.516	.026
Present Position						
	Build'g Staff	Dis't Staff	Ele Prin	Sec Prin	A Sup't	Sup't
Ele Prin						
N	7	20	89	4	-	-
Years	8	7	9	4	-	-
Sec Prin						
N	20	11	5	70	-	-
Years	5	4	8	10	-	-
Ass't Sup						
N	12	32	16	22	53	4
Years	4	5	9	5	8	8
Sup't						
N	10	35	17	34	42	70
Years	6	5	5	5	6	7
F	1.76	1.79	3.65	9.93	.850	.140
p	.167	.153	.014	.001	.358	.709

Age Beginning Administrative Positions By Gender and Position

	STAFF		LINE			
Gender	Build'g Staff	Dis't Staff	Ele Prin	Sec Prin	A Sup't	Sup't
Females						
N	18	39	54	24	16	13
Age	31	37	39	40	42	45
Males						
N	57	30	70	102	76	61
Age	34	30	32	36	40	39
F	.86	3.98	18.7	5.92	.59	4.78
p	.35	.049	.001	.016	.44	.032
Present Position						
Ele Prin						
N	6	20	86	4	-	-
Age	28	35	37	33	-	-
Sec Prin						
N	20	11	5	66	-	-
Age	33	39	34	40	-	-
Ass't Sup						
N	12	31	16	22	51	5
Age	31	34	32	35	41	31
Sup't						
N	10	34	17	34	41	69
Age	28	35	29	32	39	41
F	2.34	1.46	3.52	14.1	4.44	6.33
p	.087	.230	.017	.001	.038	.014

Family Characteristics Data

Marital Status
Gender

	Never Married		Married		Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed		
	N	% of Gender	N	% of Gender	N	% of Gender	Total
Females	15	17	61	68	14	16	90
Males	4	2	177	93	9	5	190

(raw chi square = 34.32, df = 2, p = .0000)

Position

	Never Married		Married		Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed		
	N	% of Position	N	% of Position	N	% of Position	Total
Sup't	3	6	57	83	6	9	66
A Sup't	1	2	47	87	6	11	54
Sec Prin	6	9	60	90	3	4	69
Ele Prin	9	10	74	82	8	9	91

(raw chi square = 6.16, df = 6, p = .4045)

Gender and Position

	Never Married		Married		Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed		
	N	% of Gender & Position	N	% of Gender & Position	N	% of Gender & Position	Total
F Sup't	2	15	7	54	2	31	11
M Sup't	1	2	50	89	2	4	53
F A Sup't	4	24	7	64	4	36	15
M A Sup't	1	2	40	93	2	5	43
F Sec Prin	4	24	12	71	4	12	20
M Sec Prin	2	4	48	96	4	8	56
F Ele Prin	9	18	35	71	4	8	48
M Ele Prin	0	--	39	95	1	2	40

(raw chi square = 54.83, df = 14, p = .0000)

	Sibling Position	Number of Children
	N	N
All	128	.91

Gender

	N	% of Gender	N	% of Gender	Number of Children
Female	48	53	25	27	.45
Male	84	44	161	79	1.13
	F = 5.89 df = 3 p = .052		F = 15.36 df = 1 p = .001		

Position

	N	% of Position	N	% of Gender	Number of Children
Sup't	32	46	52	71	1.13
A Sup't	26	48	44	77	1.02
Sec Prin	23	34	39	55	.75
Ele Prin	47	52	51	53	.51
	F = 5.43 df = 3 p = .143		F = .854 df = 3 p = .466		

Gender and Position

	N	% of Gender & Position	N	% of Gender	Number of Children
F Sup't	7	54	4	33	.23
M Sup't	20	47	36	60	1.34
F A Sup't	6	55	3	27	.64
M A Sup't	20	47	27	43	1.11
F Sec Prin	7	41	5	28	.33
M Sec Prin	16	32	27	51	.89
F Ele Prin	28	57	8	16	.50
M Ele Prin	19	10	29	63	1.18
	F = 8.32 df = 7 p = .3051		F = .455 df = 7 p = .707		